



**DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY**  
7700 ARLINGTON BOULEVARD, SUITE 5101  
FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA 22042-5101

May 9, 2019

Ms. Sarika Ram  
MuckRock News  
DEPT MR 55976  
411A Highland Ave  
Somerville, MA 02144-2516

Dear MS. Sarika Ram:

Thank you for your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request of June 12, 2018, received by the Defense Health Agency (DHA) on June 12, 2018. Your request has been assigned Control Number 2018-287. Please reference this number in any future correspondence on this matter.

A review of your request shows that you are seeking:

*[All TRICARE complaints, including Factual Appeals, Medical Necessity Appeals, Pharmacy Appeals, Medicare-TRICARE Appeals, and Grievances that include any of the following words or phrases:*

- 'trans'
- 'transgender'
- 'gender dysphoria'
- 'gender affirming care'
- 'gender affirming treatment'
- 'hormone therapy'
- 'hormone treatment'
- 'cross-sex hormones'
- 'sex reassignment surgery'
- 'gender reassignment surgery'
- 'gender transition'.]

The DHA has not been able to respond to your request within the FOIA's 20-day statutory time period due to unusual circumstances. The unusual circumstances may include: (a) the need to search for and collect records from a facility geographically separated from this office; (b) the potential volume of records responsive to your request; (c) the need for consultation with one or more agencies which have substantial interest in either the determination or the subject matter of the records; and (d) an unusually high volume of FOIA requests.

In accordance with 32 Code of Federal Regulations Part § 286.8(a), the DHA FOIA Service Center responds to requests in the order received. Your request is presently **135** in our queue to be processed. Due to the number of open requests ahead of yours, the **estimated completion date** for your request is now **October 18, 2019**. We sincerely regret there is a

substantial delay in processing requests, and we solicit your patience and understanding as we diligently work to respond.

If you are not satisfied with this action, you may appeal to the DHA appellate authority. Your appeal must be written and postmarked within 90 calendar days of the date of this letter, should cite the above referenced control number, and should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal." To submit electronically, email [DHA.FOIAappeals@mail.mil](mailto:DHA.FOIAappeals@mail.mil). To submit via postal delivery, send your written appeal to:

Defense Health Agency  
FOIA Requester Service Center  
Attention: FOIA Appellate Authority  
7700 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 5101  
Falls Church, VA 22042-5101

In addition, please note you have the right to seek dispute resolution services from the DHA FOIA Public Liaison via the following contact information:

Defense Health Agency  
FOIA Requester Service Center  
Attention: FOIA Public Liaison  
7700 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 5101  
Falls Church, VA 22042-5101  
Phone: 1+ (703) 275-6363

If you are unable to resolve your FOIA dispute through our FOIA Public Liaison, the Federal FOIA Ombudsman's office offers mediation services through the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) to help resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies. You may contact OGIS via the following:

National Archives and Records Administration  
Office of Government Information Services  
8601 Adelphi Road - OGIS  
College Park, MD 20740-6001  
Email: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)  
Phone: 1+ (202) 741-5770 or Toll Free: 1-877-684-6448

If you have any questions about processing your request under the FOIA, please contact me at (703) 275-6009, or the FOIA Requester Service Center at (703) 275-6363.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nadine Brown".

Nadine Brown  
FOIA Compliance Manager  
DHA Privacy and Civil Liberties Office